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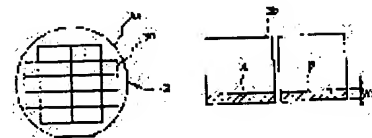
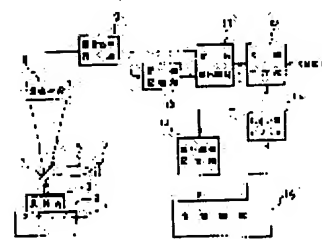
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(57)Abstract:

PURPOSE: To improve the availability factor of an apparatus so that a threshold value is determined based on the statistic of difference quantity data of plural points on an object to be inspected.

CONSTITUTION: In a sample 3, many chips 3b are arranged in a rectangular lattice shape on one surface of a discoidal silicon substrate 3a. When one- dimensional line sensor such as CCD is used as an image pickup means 8 for such semiconductor wafer 3, the left side chip 3b out of adjacent two chips 3b is first taken in as picture signal A on an inspection width WT, processed by a signal-processing circuit 9 and thereafter housed in a picture storage 10. Then, the right side chip 3b is image-picked up as picture signal B on the same inspection width WD, processed by the signal-processing circuit 9 and thereafter sent to a difference detection circuit 11 without being housed in the picture storage 10. In the difference detection circuit 11, two picture signals are compared with each other and it is determined that there is a deficiency when the difference between the two signals exceeds a certain value. Thus, it is possible to set an optimum deficiency detection threshold value automatically and



in a short time.

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